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## **Post-Disaster Resources for Mental and Emotional Health**

### [Coping with Disasters](#)

The emotional toll that disaster brings can sometimes be even more devastating than the financial strains of damage and loss of home, business, or personal property. This FEMA resource offers information on understanding common human reactions to disaster events and recognizing signs of disaster related stress and strategies for easing stress. Also, information on helping kids cope with disaster and typical children's reactions to disaster by age.

### [Coping with a Traumatic Event](#)

Traumatic events often cause feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and aggression. It will take time before you start to feel better. This CDC resource shows that there are many things survivors can do to cope with traumatic events, including talking to family, friends, and clergy for support. Survivors should consider seeking professional help if feeling sad or depressed for more than two weeks, or if sadness and depression interferes with daily living tasks like caring for family or doing one's job.

### [Common Reactions After Trauma](#)

Most people have some kind of stress reaction after a trauma. Having such a reaction has nothing to do with personal weakness. Stress reactions may last for several days or even a few weeks. For most people, if symptoms occur, they will slowly decrease over time. All kinds of trauma survivors commonly experience stress reactions. This is true for veterans, children, and disaster rescue or relief workers. This resource from the National Center for PTSD says that if you understand what is happening when you or someone you know reacts to a traumatic event, you may be less fearful and better able to handle things.

### [Managing Stress After a Hurricane](#)

Understanding common responses to extreme events can help you to cope effectively with your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. This resource from the American Psychological Association offers a guide with practical tips that can help you along the path to managing the storm's aftermath and feeling better.

### [Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event - Managing Your Stress](#) (PDF)

When you are exposed to traumatic events such as natural disaster, be aware of how these events can affect you personally. Most people show signs of stress after the event. These signs are normal. Over time, as your life gets back to normal, they should decrease. After a stressful event, monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones. Know how to relieve stress. And know when to get help.

### [Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event](#) (PDF)

The effect of a disaster or traumatic event goes far beyond its immediate devastation. Just as it takes time to reconstruct damaged buildings, it takes time to grieve and rebuild our lives. Life may not return to normal for months, or even years, following a disaster or traumatic event. There may be changes in living conditions that cause changes in day-to-day activities, leading to strains in relationships, changes in expectations, and shifts in responsibilities. These disruptions in relationships, roles, and routines can make life unfamiliar or unpredictable. This guide from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services SAMHSA Center for Mental Health Services outlines what you might expect in your personal, family, work, and financial life, with tips for managing stress productively.

### [Self-Care After Disasters](#)

Natural and technological disasters impact survivors, bereaved family members, witnesses to the event, and friends of those involved. Rescue workers, emergency medical and mental health care providers, and volunteers are also affected. Disasters can also impact members of the media, as well as citizens of the community, the country, and the world. Disasters can cause a number of different stress reactions in those affected. This resource from the National Center for PTSD discusses steps you can take to manage stress after a disaster.

### [Coping with Traumatic Stress Reactions](#)

When trauma survivors take direct action to cope with their stress reactions, they put themselves in a position of power. Active coping with the trauma makes you begin to feel less helpless.

### [Effects of Disasters: Risk and Resilience Factors](#)

Learn about factors that make it more likely that someone will have more severe or longer-lasting stress reactions after disasters

### [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

An easy-to-read booklet on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that explains what it is, when it starts, how long it lasts, and how to get help.

## **Talking with kids about disasters**

Dramatic images repeated on the news or talked about at school can be upsetting to adults, but even more so to kids who may not have the life experience to put things in perspective. This can lead to anxiety or fear about many of the things being discussed: natural disasters, disruption, loss, and death. We've put together a few resources for parents and teachers to help discuss these things with kids.

### [Sesame Street's Hurricane Kit](#)

This kit includes four Sesame Street videos for kids, as well as tips for parents, teachers and caregivers. It helps kids explore their feelings and their fears, as well as signs of stress.

### [Here for Each Other](#) (PDF)

A Sesame Street resource for parents and caregivers that includes tips, ideas, activities and ways to talk with your child about what happened while remaining hopeful for better things to come. With this information you can create a comfortable and caring environment, no matter where you are, even when you're not surrounded by your own familiar things.

### [Talking to Kids About Hurricane Sandy](#)

The Child Mind Institute says, "Be calm, factual and supportive. And turn off the TV." They offer 6 simple tips for parents.

### [Kids: Anxiety, fears, and phobias](#)

This resource from award-winning Nemours KidsHealth site offers guidance to parents for helping kids of all ages to deal productively with anxiety, fears and phobias.

[Talking with kids about world natural disasters](#) – An article from the NYU Child Study Center that offers advice to adults about talking over disaster news with children.

### [Recovery: After a Hurricane](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) says that because children turn to adults for information, comfort, and help, their functioning and recovery will be influenced by how their parents and caregivers cope during and after the hurricane.

"Children do best when parents and teachers remain (or at least appear) calm, answer children's questions honestly, and respond as best they can to requests." This resource offers resources for parents and teachers to cope during recovery.

## **Additional Resources**

[TV News](#) and [Accidents & Disasters](#) - Talking with Kids about Tough Issues

[8 Steps To Explain Disasters to Children](#)

[Explaining death to children](#)

[Coping with Family Stress after a Disaster](#)